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ABSTRACT

To help determine the community's work force training needs, Spartanburg Technical College (STC) completed an extensive research study. It included a survey of 1,501 high school juniors in Cherokee, Union, and Spartanburg counties in South Carolina; a survey of 293 area businesses and industries; focus groups representing 63 companies, elected officials, human service employers, educators, and health care providers; and a survey of 396 citizens in the community. Results of the high school study indicated strong preferences for careers in professional occupational areas, with 10 percent preferring health service jobs and nine percent aspiring to technician jobs. Seventy-five percent of the students planned to attend college, with 54 percent considering a public university and 36 percent considering a technical college. Results from the work force survey suggested that employers expect higher levels of skill and competency in the work force, especially in writing, mathematics, thinking, computer literacy, and leadership. The focus groups agreed with this assertion, noting that a strong foundation in the academic basics is vital to obtaining more advanced, technically specific skills. Finally, the community survey showed that one-hundred percent of the alumni citizens who responded were satisfied with the quality of the course they'd taken at STC, and would recommend the college to a friend. (Contains 13 graphs.) (EMH)

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1998 COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

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SPARTANBURG TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Preparing the Work Force for the 21st Century

Spartanburg Technical College . . .

Spartanburg Technical College is best known in the Spartanburg community for its technical programs that prepare citizens for successful employment in local business and industry, and health care services. The College has been extremely successful in its 36-year history of technical education, consistently placing over 90 percent of its graduates in Upstate jobs.

STC's Mission . . .

The mission of Spartanburg Technical College is the economic development of Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union counties. To achieve this purpose, the College provides the citizens of the Upstate with world-class training that leads to high-paying technical jobs. The College also offers the first two years of a baccalaureate degree for transfer to South Carolina four-year colleges and universities.

Preparing for the Future . . .

To assure high quality, technologically up-to-date training today and in the future, Spartanburg Technical College listens to the needs of its customers. Annually, over 500 local employers and graduates advise the College on current and future trends in technical careers. In addition, practitioners provide an in-depth technical review of each academic program every five years. This review process assures that Spartanburg Technical College students are being trained in the skills that they will encounter in the workplace upon graduation.

Community-based Research . . .

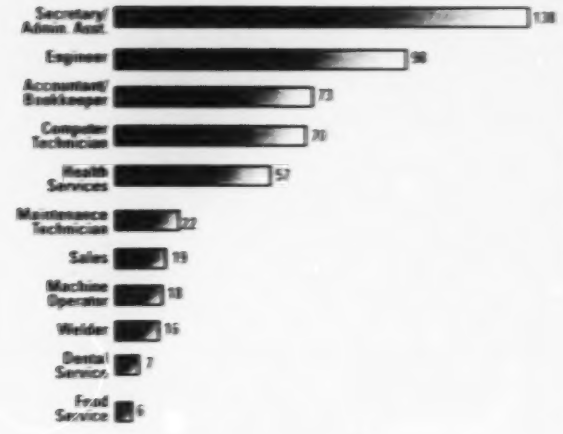
To further prepare the College to meet the needs of the community, Spartanburg Technical College recently completed an extensive community-based research study. The purpose of the research study was to determine the community's work force training needs as well as the impression citizens have of the College. The study included:

- A survey of 1,501 high school juniors in Cherokee, Union and Spartanburg counties
- A survey of 293 area business and industries. Listings of companies were provided by Chamber of Commerce organizations in Spartanburg, Union, Gaffney and Greer.
- Focus groups representing 63 companies, elected officials, human service employers, educators, and health care providers.
- A survey of 396 citizens in the community

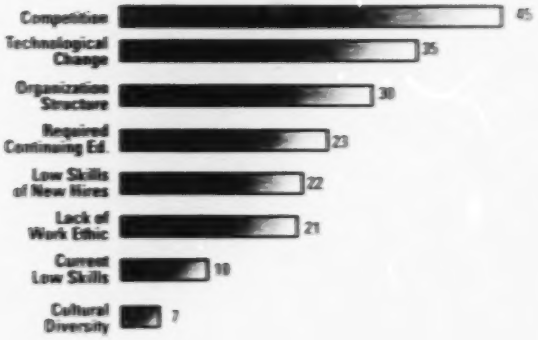
The results of this study provide Spartanburg Technical College with important information concerning current and future educational needs of the community. STC plans to use this data to develop new strategies for education and training in the community as the College plans for the 21st century.

Work Force Study

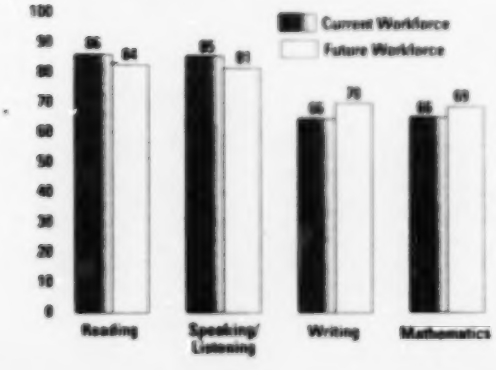
Top Technical Jobs Needed in the Upstate



Factors Driving the Need for Training



Basic Skills Needed Now and in Five Years



In this study, business and industry in Spartanburg Technical College's service area - the Upstate counties of Spartanburg, Union and Cherokee counties was surveyed to identify their educational needs and the College's potential role in meeting these needs. Surveys were mailed to 380 employers with 293 returned, for a response rate of 10 percent.

Highlights of Survey Results

The top five technical jobs needed in the Spartanburg community are administrative assistant/secretarial, engineer, accountant/bookkeeper, computer technician and health service occupations.

In the current work force, the level of education preferred by employers is more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. In five years, almost all employers in the study believe that more than a high school education will be required for employment.

Employers expect higher levels of skill and competency in the work force, especially in writing, mathematics, thinking, computer literacy and leadership.

Specific thinking skills employers believe are important for employees to obtain now and even more important in five years include: problem-solving, learning new skills, decision-making and understanding diverse cultures.

The current work force has important training needs in basic skills (reading, speaking, listening, writing and mathematics).

Employers are most familiar with Spartanburg Technical College's technical and transfer programs and somewhat familiar with customized training and short-term classes.

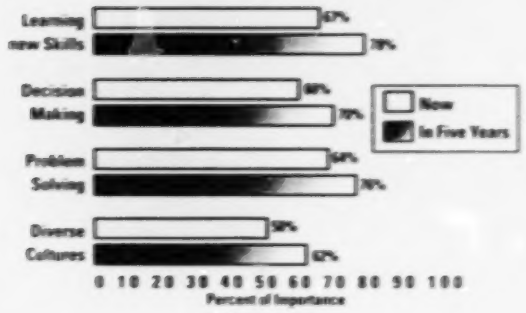
One-fifth of the employers surveyed used Spartanburg Technical College to conduct training and over two-thirds plan to use STC in the future.

Of those companies that have used STC for training, over three-fourths reported training as a cost effective value.

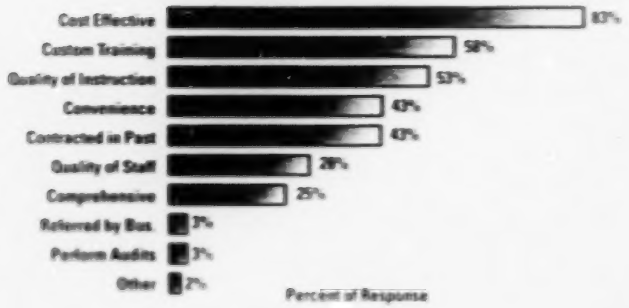
Over half of the companies say they chose STC for training because the College customized training, provided quality instruction, offered on-site classes and were satisfied with past training results.

Work Force Study

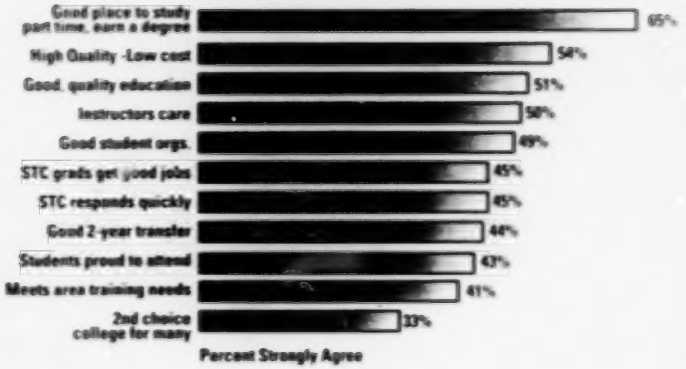
Thinking Skills Needed Now and in Five Years



Employers Rationale for Using STC to Conduct Training



Industry's Impressions of STC



Sixty-three organizations in the College's service area participated in focus group sessions to determine work force issues, trends in the service area, training needs, and STC's role in work force development.

Highlights of Focus Group Discussions

The allied health participants addressed the staffing shortages most health care facilities are facing today and in the future.

In the industrial/manufacturing area, a high degree of basic skills in mathematics, measurement and the use of the metric system is needed.

Employers felt that employees lacking a strong foundation in the academic basics may not be able to be educated for more advanced technically-specific skills.

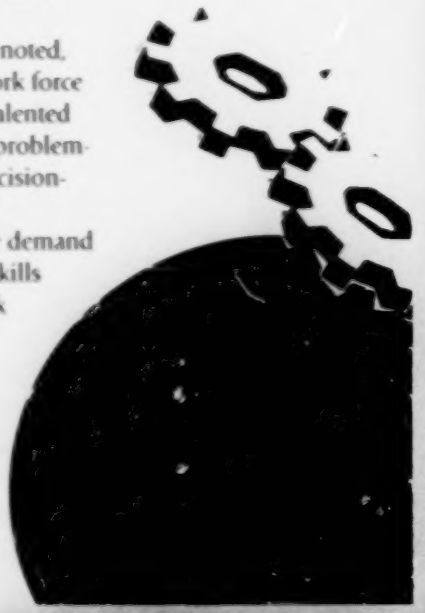
One employer noted, "Our future work force will be multi-talented and will need problem-solving and decision-making skills." There is a large demand for computer skills across the work force.

The educators' focus group saw a need to make skills taught relevant to the workplace. There is a strong need and demand for continued career guidance and job placement services.

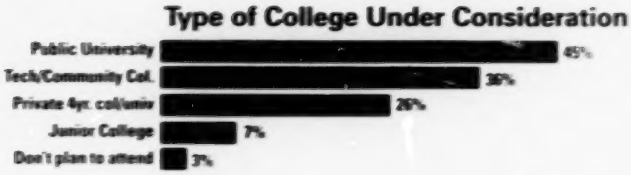
Employers stressed the need for training to be accessible and to be focused in the areas of leadership, teamwork and diversity.

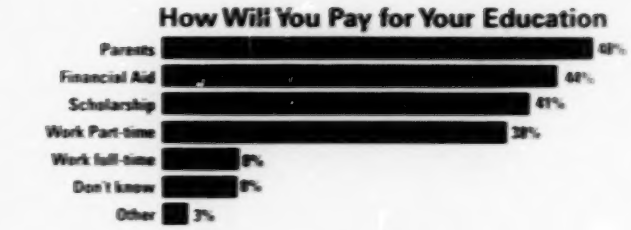
There is a need for training in cultural diversity due to the high number of European companies who have relocated to Upstate South Carolina.

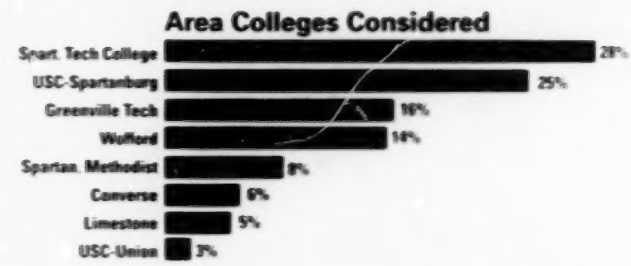
Employers value employees who learn quickly and grasp change.

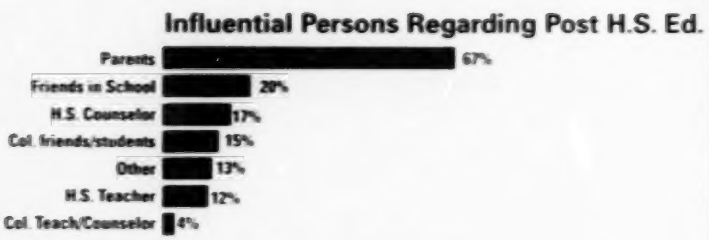


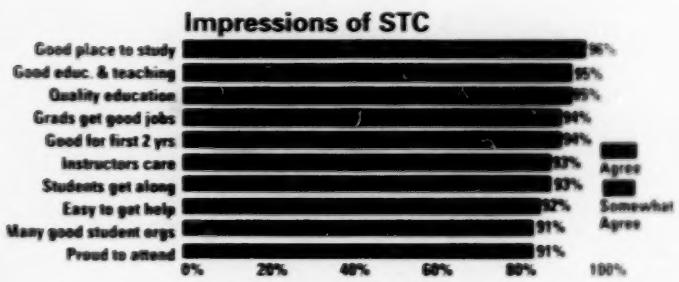
High School Student Study










Impressions of STC
Good place to study 96%
Good educ. & teaching 95%
Quality education 95%
Grads get good jobs 94%
Good for first 2 yrs 94%
Instructors care 93%
Students get along 93%
Easy to get help 92%
Many good student orgs 91%
Proud to attend 91%
Agree
Somewhat Agree
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

High school juniors in 14 high schools were asked about their post-high school plans, factors influencing their postsecondary education and their perceptions of Spartanburg Technical College.

Highlights of Results

High school juniors indicated strong preferences for careers in professional occupational areas with 10 percent preferring health service jobs and nine percent aspiring to technician jobs.

Seventy-five percent of high school juniors plan to attend college with 54 percent considering a public university and 36 percent considering attending a technical college.

Five percent of students planning to attend college will work part-time while in college.

Fifty-two percent of students reported that their parents encourage them to attend college and 28 percent reported that their parents insist that they go to college.

High school students reported that the person(s) who most influence their post high school education plans are their parents with friends ranking second, and high school counselors ranking third.

Over one-third (38 percent) of juniors indicated a need for financial aid while in college.

Students indicated that the most important factors impacting their selection of a college were the availability of programs /courses they wanted, a safe campus environment, a college with a good academic reputation, availability of financial aid, and availability of job placement.

Twenty-eight percent of high school juniors surveyed indicated an interest in attending STC, the largest percentage of interest in any single college in the Spartanburg community.

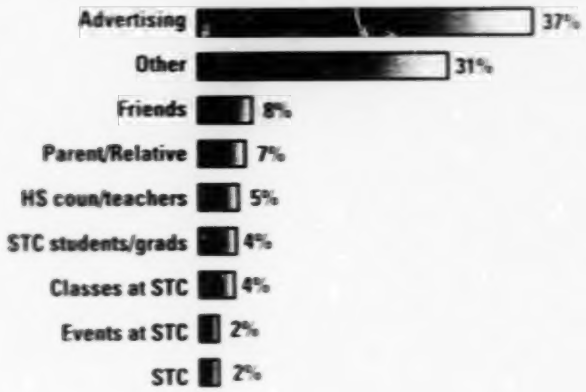
Ninety-four percent of students were aware of STC with 33 percent learning about the College from high school counselors/ teachers.

Factors preventing students from enrolling at STC included the College not offering the program the students wanted, students wanting to attend a large college, and students preferring to attend college away from home.

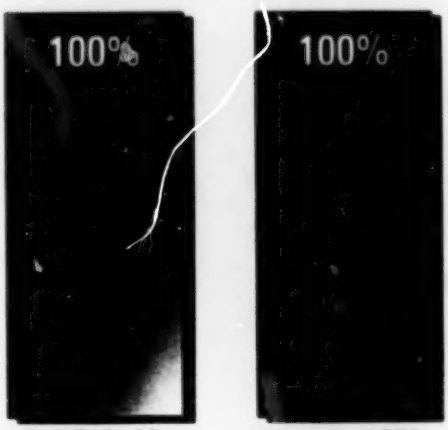
High school juniors stated that STC was unique because the College is conveniently located, low cost, offers many good programs/ classes, instructors really care about students and the College is small.

Citizens Survey

How Did You Hear About STC?



Percent Satisfied with STC and Percent that Would Recommend STC



Spartanburg Technical College completed telephone surveys to 396 citizens from communities in Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union counties. Most of the citizens surveyed were over 35 years of age and therefore provided another perspective of training needs. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were employed full-time and 21 percent were retired.

Highlights of Results

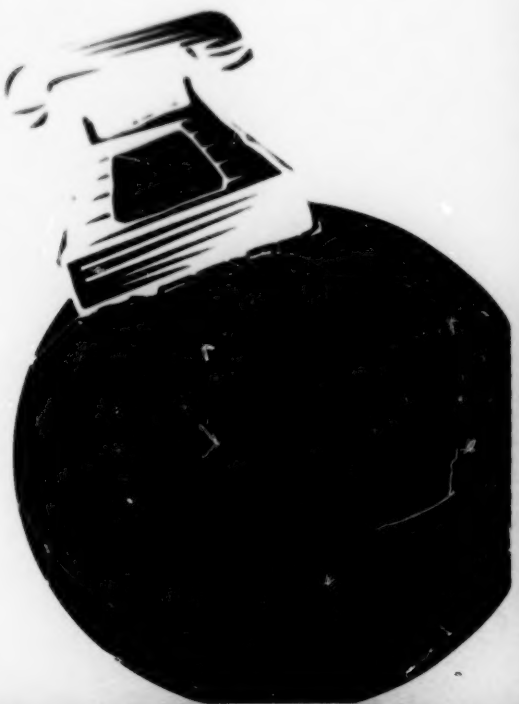
Ninety-seven percent of citizens surveyed had heard about the College primarily from advertising.

Twenty-five percent had taken at least one course at STC with the largest percent having taken computer classes.

One-hundred percent of the citizens surveyed were satisfied with the quality of the course taken at the College and 100 percent would recommend STC to a friend.

Citizens agree strongly that STC is a good place to study part-time and earn a degree, offers high quality education at a price that most people can afford, and is a college that students are proud to attend.

Slightly more than one-fifth or (22 percent) expressed an interest in taking courses at STC primarily in the area of computer training.



Research Partners

STC's community-based research was conducted by the College's development office through the assistance of organizations listed below:

John W. Quinley & Associates
Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce
Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
Union Chamber of Commerce and Development Board
Spartanburg County School Districts 1-7
Cherokee County School District
Union County School District

Quality Education for Quality Careers

Spartanburg Technical College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin /ethnic origin or disability in its admissions policies, programs, activities or employment practices.

Cut here, place in envelope and mail to Spartanburg Technical College

Want more information about Spartanburg Technical College?

❒ **Yes, I would like to receive the following STC information!**

❒ **Credit degree, diploma, certificate programs**
❒ **Continuing Education courses**
❒ **Job placement, career planning services**
❒ **Other**

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone_____

For more information, call admissions at 591-3800 or 1-800-922-3679
Mail to: Spartanburg Technical College Admissions, P.O. Box 4386, Spartanburg, S.C. 29305

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